

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY 50X1-HUM

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background information on the postwar development of the Polish Navy during the years 1945 - 1956.

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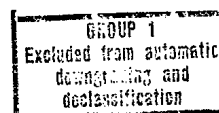
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1. The year 1945 marked the beginning of the "Sovietization" of the Polish Navy, a process which was to continue until October 1956. During this period all key positions in the Polish Navy were taken over by Soviet officers, and these changes were often carried out in a violent and brutal manner.
2. The condition of the Polish Navy in the first postwar year was such as to render it incapable of even the simplest of operations. The only battle-worthy unit in the Navy at this time was a battalion of marines, which by the end of the year had been enlarged to full regimental strength. The Commander of this formation was Lt. Col. (Fnu) Kopiec, who had been an officer of the River Squadron at Pinsk before World War II; his deputy was Commander Mietielica. The

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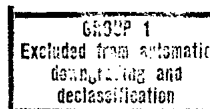
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commander of the Polish Navy at the time was a Soviet officer, Rear Admiral (Fnu) Abromov, while Commander (Fnu) Muraviov, another Soviet officer, was head of the naval base in Gdynia.

3. In the same year at Political Directorate, organized along lines similar to those of the Soviet Armed Forces, was established, with Col. (Fnu) Urbanowicz at its head. Urbanowicz was a Soviet officer of Polish origin who had been transferred to the Polish Army. He replaced Col. (Fnu) Bromberg, who had long been active in indoctrinating the Polish Navy with Communist ideology.
4. Approximately at the same time, another autonomous department was set up in the Polish armed forces and was called Informacja, which assumed the functions of a field security service and was mainly staffed by Soviet officers. Its establishment brought with it the first signs of the terror which was to follow in the subsequent "Sovietization" of the Polish Navy.
5. The atmosphere prevailing among members of the Polish Navy at this time was one of confusion and apprehension. The general opinion was that the present exigency was only temporary, and it was expected that Soviet personnel and officers would be withdrawn from the Polish Navy. Discipline was at an ebb, often falling below the most elementary requirements; drunkenness was rife, and nightly shooting incidents occurred in which many persons were killed or wounded. Clashes between Polish marines and Soviet troops stationed in the coastal area were characteristic of the existing tensions.

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Communist propaganda controlled by the Political Directorate was of an extremely crude and naive nature and was received with derision by the men. Positions in the Navy were slowly being filled by prewar officers returning from German prisoner-of-war camps, without, for the time being, any undue interference on the part of Informacja.

1946

6. In 1946, several vessels of the prewar Polish Navy returned to Gdynia. Among them were the submarines SEP, RYS and ZBIK, which had been detained in Sweden for the duration of the war; they had entered Swedish territorial waters in October 1939. The commander of these vessels was Captain (Fnu) Salomon who, two years later, was appointed the commander of Gdynia Naval Base. He was later retired. About 75 percent of the crews manning these submarines consisted of regular service petty officers, but this situation was soon changed once it became known that the submarine formation was a center of anti-Communist resistance.
 7. The crews of these submarines were the first against whom the terrorist methods of INFORMACJA were directed. A number of arrests were made, and then a thorough cleaning-up operation was carried out in the entire submarine force.
- In the subsequent discussions about this purge, political officers in other naval units explained it away as the "breaking up of a conspiracy".

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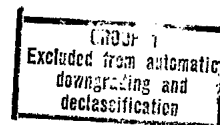
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8. After five years without proper maintenance and regular dry-docking, the submarines were unfit for normal duty. The poor condition of their batteries made diving impossible. Two of them, ZBIK and RYS, of 1930 French construction, were unserviceable to the extent that the advisability of an overall refitting was extremely doubtful. It was finally decided to refit them for training purposes. Moreover, the general refitting of the Polish Naval vessels, which lasted three years, was done in a period when industrial chaos reigned in Poland, and costs were extremely high.
9. Hand in hand with the growing difficulties and increasing expenses, a general purge of personnel was initiated. The first to be arrested was Capt. Eng. (Fnu) Siemaszko, a prewar technical officer and professor at the Technical Academy. Siemaszko, who was highly respected, was charged with sabotage and abuse and sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment. He subsequently died in prison. Two other arrests were made in this connection, which became known as "The Submarine Affair". The first was the arrest of Commander Eng. (Fnu) Zawiasa, a prewar officer who was known for his modesty and honesty. He was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment, but was released before the termination of his sentence.
10. The second officer arrested was Commander Eng. (Fnu) Weiss, a Soviet National of Polish origin who had become a Polish citizen and had remained in Poland after the war. He was described as a

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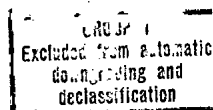
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drunkard and a trouble maker who had acted as an agent provocateur for the INFORMACJA and had been the chief prosecution witness in the "Submarine Affair". He apparently had previously worked for the NKVD in the USSR, and his arrest caused some astonishment. However, from the proceedings of the trial, it became clear that his arrest resulted from an intrigue within INFORMACJA. It was noteworthy that no connection existed between Weiss and Zawiasa.

11. Another affair of this same period, which became known as the "Medical Corps Case", involved pilfering, bribery, and black market activities and led to the arrest of many doctors, pharmacists and administration officers. Several officers received severe prison sentences, and one pharmacist, Capt. (Fnu) Hostynski, was sentenced to death. Capt. Dr. (Fnu) Bielawski, head of the Naval Medical Service, was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment, although the question of his guilt remained doubtful. Another officer who received a 10-year prison sentence was Lt. (Fnu) Lesberg.
12. The next group of vessels to return to the Polish Navy consisted of the prewar mine-sweepers, CZAJKA, MEWA, RYBITWA and ZURAW, all of which had been captured by the Germans in 1939 after the surrender of the Hel Peninsula. They had been stripped of their minesweeping equipment, and during the war had been used as training torpedo boats, rescue vessels, and patrol boats. Their engines were badly worn out, and they could only make half-speed. These vessels were not refitted as minesweepers; three of them

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were converted to corvettes, and the ZURAW was refitted for hydrographic purposes.

13. This so-called "Soviet Gift" caused great bitterness among the Polish seamen. The Soviet Navy had seized the Polish portion of the divided German Navy and, instead of ex-German vessels, the Soviet authorities delivered to Gdynia several ships of Soviet wartime manufacture, which were far inferior to the German produce.

The following vessels were taken over by the Polish Navy:-

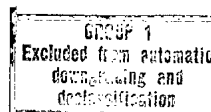
- a. Nine minesweepers, each of 120 tons displacement.
- b. Twelve anti-submarine speedboats.
- c. Two motor torpedo boats.

The hull construction of these vessels was primitive and provisional, their engines were worn out, and they showed lack of proper and regular maintenance. All these factors obliged the Poles to regularly carry out expensive repairs on the vessels. Capt. (Fnu) Boczowski was appointed commander of the groups, and the following were among those appointed lieutenant commander and first lieutenant:

- a. Leszczynski (Fnu).
- b. Zaborski (Fnu).
- c. Chrostowski (Fnu).
- d. Gorny (Fnu).
- e. Kolasa (Fnu).
- f. Pierzynski (Fnu).
- g. Zytowiecki (Fnu).
- h. Czerwinski (Fnu).
- i. Wronka (Fnu).

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Several prewar chief petty officers were given commissioned rank and posted as commanders of a number of minesweepers and anti-submarine vessels.

14. As a result of the efforts of the late Capt. (Fnu) Mieszkowski, an officer's nautical school was established in 1946. Its first students, of whom there were nearly 80, were mainly political officers from the Army. This was one of the first important steps taken by the Polish Communist Party, and it had the following results:

- a) A purge of prewar officers from the Navy.
- b) The rooting out of sympathy towards the British Navy, which had become very popular with Polish seamen during and after World War II.
- c) The replacing of the image of the British Navy by that of its Soviet counterpart as an example and ideal.

15. With the arrival of the first students, all of whom had been carefully selected by the Political Directorate of the Armed Forces, further steps were taken to ensure the correct political supervision of the school. The greatest problem faced by the Directorate in this respect was the teaching staff. The school's first professors were:

- a) Capt. (Fnu) Mieszkowski, who was also commander of the school.

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- b) Capt. Eng. (Fnu) Zelenay, the scientific director.
- c) Derzakowski (Fnu) - officer.
- d) Dehnel (Fnu) - officer.
- e) Jasinski (Fnu) - officer.
- f) Hornung (Fnu) - officer.
- g) Rychel (Fnu) - officer.
- h) Slawek (Fnu) - officer.

Several chief petty officers also served as instructors. The only Soviet officer at the school, acting officially as "Soviet Naval Adviser", was Capt. (Fnu) Szylingowski, of Polish origin. He was later in command of the Navy for a short period, but was finally recalled to the USSR.

- 16. The school's Political Directorate consisted of Major (Fnu) Dziamek, Lt. (Fnu) Faust, and Lt. (Fnu) Gilewicz. Of these men, Gilewicz was the only one to survive the Stalinist purges of the Rokossovsky period. In 1956, he was^a full colonel and head of an important department on the Political Board of the armed forces.
- 17. Scientific equipment at the school was poor, and the standard of the students was also incredibly low. Teaching of the English language was forbidden by the Political Directorate, and the only foreign language taught was Russian.
- 18. In accordance with directives from the Polish General Staff and the Chief Political Directorate, special action was taken to break the autonomy of the Navy, to orientate it on a pro-Soviet line, and

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to develop within it the "primary organizations" of the Communist Party. A detachment from the Polish Communist battalions in France was transferred to the Navy to serve as "pioneers of the Communist Party" in its various departments. These persons were actually secret agents of Informacja.

19. Battle readiness in the Polish Navy in 1946 was at a minimum, and supplies of food and clothing were miserably short. Officers' pay was desperately low, and in many cases their families were near starvation.

The Polish Ministry of Defense and the Chief Political Directorate in Warsaw were highly pessimistic about the Navy at this stage. They were against its development if it necessitated the continued service of prewar officers. Subsidies from the military budget for the Navy were cut on every possible occasion, and the efforts of such of its leading figures as Mieszkowski and Wojcieszek to improve conditions in the Service were systematically obstructed. These premeditated attempts to undermine the strength of the Polish Navy were later used as a charge against Gen. Spychalski.

1947

20. In 1947 Rear Admiral Mohuczy was replaced by Rear Admiral Steyer as Commander of the Polish Navy. Mohuczy was appointed President of the Maritime Youth League and given an office in Warsaw. A few years later, he was arrested in Gdynia on a trumped-up charge and, after having been suitably "processed" by Informacja, was sentenced

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to 15 years' imprisonment in a show trial. He subsequently died in prison of a heart attack.

21. In summer 1947, the Polish destroyer BLYSKAWICA returned from Britain under Commander (Fnu) Romanowski. Romanowski's place was then taken over by Commander (Fnu) Krzywlec, and Romanowski himself was appointed commander of the submarine force. The first lieutenant of the BLYSKAWICA was Lt. Cmdr. (Fnu) Weglarz. The entire crew of this destroyer was demobilized with the exception of a few experienced petty officers, and a political deputy was immediately appointed. The first officer in this function was Capt. (Fnu) Neugarten, who was later replaced by Capt. Pastuszuk. Because the BLYSKAWICA was the largest vessel in the Polish Navy, special precautions were taken about matters of "internal security", and an Informacja officer, Capt. (Fnu) Gajdzik, was put in charge of these functions. Gajdzik was described as educated, intelligent, cynical and sadistic. He played an important role in purging the Navy of prewar officers.
22. The Polish training schooner, ISKRA, also returned to Poland from Gibraltar in 1947, under the command of Cmdr. (Fnu) Konarski. The first lieutenant of the ISKRA was Lt. Cmdr. (Fnu) Sobczyk. Konarski soon became the target of attacks from the political authorities, and two years later was retired on a pension. Cadets of the second course at the Officers' Nautical School, who were sent on training cruises aboard this schooner, were all carefully

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selected by the political authorities; they had to be members of the Communist Youth Organization.

23. The Political Directorate grew rapidly as new functions on board ship and in the various departments were created. Many newly promoted political officers arrived from the Army and took over such previously unknown functions as political lecturer, youth organizer, agitprop adviser, club leader, etc. In addition to the official nominees, many political officers with very vaguely defined duties were put on the Navy's complement and later became secretaries of the departmental Party organizations.

1948

24. In 1948, activity was increased toward removing the "symptoms of the prewar regime." The Navy was considered the most reactionary branch of the Armed Forces, and a large number of Army officers were transferred to its ranks so as to complete the purge of its prewar personnel.. Many of these newcomers were high-ranking officers, among them many colonels and majors, who were graduates of Soviet military academies. These personnel were unversed in naval matters, and their incompetence led to frequent friction with their more experienced brother-officers. Nevertheless, they were appointed to key positions, and their decisions received the full support of the political authorities. Examples of these changes are the replacement of Commander Rychel, an experienced

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naval officer who was transferred to staff work, by Col. (Fnu) Satanowski as commander of the Officers Nautical School. Col. Satanowski had been a high-ranking officer in the Communist partisan forces during the German occupation of Poland and had come to his new assignment directly from a military academy in Moscow. A similar change took place at the main naval training base at Ustka, where Commander (Fnu) Kasperski was replaced by Major (Fnu) Zawadka.

25. The seaworthiness and battle-readiness of the vessels in the Polish Navy in 1948 were still of such a low standard that most operations, patrols, and maneuvers were out of the question. The only activity employed was minesweeping, carried out in accordance with international agreements. The minesweepers, in a poor state of repair, trawled only for contact mines and, one by one, had to be withdrawn from service and put into the yards to be refitted.
26. In 1948, the Polish Ministry of Shipping purchased four minesweepers of American manufacture. These vessels had originally been intended for civilian purposes, but only one was in fact turned over to the civilian authorities, and it was used as a buoy-tender, under the name of ZODIAK. The other three were handed over to the Navy and were given the names, MORSE, DELFIN, and FOKA.

1949

27. The training schooner, ISKRA, was scheduled to make her first postwar training cruise with cadets to Leningrad in June 1949. However, the

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departure of the vessel from Poland was delayed for two months, during which time the cadets had embarked and disembarked twice. The reason for this delay was that, for two months, the security officers had been, on orders from the NKVD, checking and re-checking the backgrounds of all on board and ascertaining their loyalty towards the USSR. When the vessel finally left Gdynia at the end of September 1949, a number of additional political officers of various ranks and undefined assignments, as well as a security officer, Lt. (Fnu) Zdebełak, had been added to the vessel's complement. These officers acted independently, ignoring the ship's regulations and the orders of the captain, Commander (Fnu) Czerwinski. Security precautions were strictly maintained, and none of the Poles was ever left to himself.

28. An important event in the annals of the Polish Navy was the promotion ceremony of the first postwar naval officers, who received their new ranks personally from Marshall Zymierski. Of the 33 graduates, 27 had previously held commissional ranks as army political officers, and six were regularly drafted midshipmen, the remainder of a group of 11 cadets at the Nautical School after a Communist "cleanup" the previous winter. The five who had fallen victims to the purge had been charged with "reactionary views", "pro-Western sympathies", "subversive political activity" and "bourgeois background". Three of them had been experienced sailors and excellent students.
29. Among the newly promoted officers were the following:

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- a. (Fnu) Studzinski, a favorite of Rokossovsky who later became Commander of the Navy.
- b. (Fnu) Pietraszkiewicz, who later became Commander of the submarine force.
- c. (Fnu) Rudomina, who later became Naval Chief of Staff.
- d. (Fnu) Wladerny, who later became head of the Naval Intelligence Branch at the Ministry of Shipping.

Present at the promotion ceremony was a group of about 20 high-ranking Soviet naval officers. By this time, these Soviets were no longer considered "advisers" or "visitors", but rather were the men who had come to take over the key positions in the Polish Navy under Rokossovsky. In winter 1949, Rear Admiral Steyer was retired, and his post was temporarily taken over by Rear Admiral (Fnu) Szylingowski.

1950

30. In summer 1950, Soviet Rear Admiral Cherokov arrived in Poland to take over command of the Polish Navy. He behaved with great tact and efficiently helped to make the "Sovietization" of the Polish Navy a smooth process. When he departed two years later, he was well liked and had made a positive impression on the Poles. Another Soviet officer who aroused similar reactions was Capt. Eng. (Fnu) Shtankovsky, who was appointed head of the Technical Department at the Polish Naval Headquarters. Other high-ranking Soviet naval officers who took over

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the posts of arrested or dismissed Polish personnel were the following:

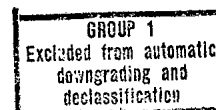
- a. Capt. (Fnu) Mironow, commander of the newly created Coast Guard.
- b. Capt. Eng. (Fnu) Polakov, Chief Naval Engineer.
- c. Col. (Fnu) Gusiyeu, head of Naval Aviation.
- d. Capt. (Fnu) Rozkov, commander of the Officers Nautical School.
- e. Commander (Fnu) Ippolitov.
- f. Commander (Fnu) Zelest.
- g. Commander (Fnu) Babuskin.

Commanders Ippolitov, Zelest, and Babuskin served as instructors at the Nautical School, where they held the position of "head of cadet faculty".

- h. Col. (Fnu) Sidorkin, officer in charge of the Quartermaster Branch.
- i. Col. (Fnu) Vierstakov, director of the Naval Medical Service.
- j. Capt. (Fnu) Smirnov, commander of the Submarine Force.

These officers received excellent conditions, furnished, spacious apartments, high pay, and private automobiles, all of which were financed from the Polish naval budget. This of course caused much resentment among the Polish naval officers whose material circumstances at the time were miserable.

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30. In the face of the bitter, but silent rejection shown them by the Polish naval personnel and civilians alike, the newcomers maintained an air of superiority and remained a closed colony. Moreover, these Soviet officers had in many cases acted as prosecution witnesses and experts in the trials of dismissed Polish naval officers, whose fate often was decided on the strength of their evidence. Naturally, this fact did not contribute toward easing the existing tensions.
31. The functions of these Soviet officers were to reorganize the internal structure of the Polish Navy along the lines of its Soviet counterpart and to introduce basic organizational and training methods, signals and patrol services, supplies, etc. in cooperation with the Soviet Baltic Fleet. The campaign for thrift, then being carried out in war-ravaged Poland, was ignored, and the expensive enterprises upon which they embarked were based on the largest military budget ever known in that country.
32. It was the Soviets who introduced a ^{monstrous} ~~monstrous~~ form of bureaucracy into the Polish Navy. Ships and shore units, staff departments, and other naval installations were swamped with numerous logbooks, records, forms, and files. From then on, paper work filled the major part of the day. Special instructions and directives resulted in an exaggerated zealotry about matters of military secrecy, and officers, particularly those serving in staff positions, were made extremely nervous by this abnormal state of affairs. For this they had good reason, since very severe penalties were being awarded for the slightest and most insignificant security breaches.

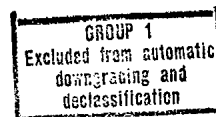
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33. The general impression made by the newly appointed Soviet officers was poor; their knowledge of naval tactics and seamanship was of a low level, and there was very little that they were able to teach the Poles. The planning of training, of maneuvers, and of everyday activities was carried out by the Soviet officers in a thoroughly bureaucratic manner and was accompanied by stringent security precautions, most of which were politically motivated. Another factor introduced into the Polish Navy by the Soviets was the so-called "signature method", a relic from Tsarist days. Enlisted men by this time had to sign an endless quantity of circulars and orders, most of which were of a nature restricting their rights and which could later be used against them in court. The ships' regulations introduced by the Soviets were very similar to those of the pre-revolutionary Russian Navy.
34. Another purge of prewar naval officers began in 1950 and was executed with merciless brutality until it had achieved its objective, by the end of 1952. During this period a large number of officers was arrested, among them such high-ranking personnel as Mieszkowski, Przybyszewski, Kasperski, Krzywlec, Rychel, Wojcieszek, Krawczyk, and Weglarz.
- Almost all prewar naval officers were dismissed, in many instances removed from the coastal region and, as a rule, persecuted later in civilian life. The following were among the few prewar officers to remain in the navy after the cleanup: - (Fnu) Ochman, (Fnu) Leszczynski, (Fnu) Zaborski, (Fnu) Szul and (Fnu) Zochowski.

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35. Capt. Mieszkowski had spent the war in a German Prisoner-of-war camp and had returned to Poland in 1945. He received a job in the Operations Branch of the Polish Navy with the rank of lieutenant commander, and when the Officers Nautical School was established he was immediately appointed its first commander. Through his enthusiasm and energy, he was able to overcome many difficulties faced by the school in postwar Poland, and he won great popularity with both the instructors and the cadets. In 1947, Mieszkowski became director of the Operations Branch, and not long afterwards Chief of Staff. In 1949, when he was already a full captain, he was appointed commander-in-chief of the Polish Battle Fleet. During the entire period, he continued to maintain close ties with the Officers Nautical School, where he remained very popular.
36. In 1949, Mieszkowski began to have misgivings; his old colleagues were disappearing from the scene, and their posts were being taken over by Soviet officers. The following incident, which occurred in October 1949, no doubt helped to convince Mieszkowski that he was under the surveillance of Informacja.

One night an urgent signal was received by the duty officer at the Operations Branch. The message, which came from the Coast Guard, requested the dispatch of a seagoing warship to pursue a fishing vessel escaping in the direction of the Swedish coast. Mieszkowski was immediately informed, and his subsequent actions were

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out of the ordinary. In spite of the fact that a duty ship with a full ^crew and capable of putting to sea in 15 minutes' notice was always available, Mieszowski personally took command of the minesweeper DELFIN. Although the skipper and part of the crew were absent, he ordered the ship ready to put to sea and even decided to sail without a radio operator. Shortly before the vessel was to sail, Lt. (Fnu) Lagiewka, a security officer, appeared and remained on board throughout the subsequent search, which ended in failure. The question of whether or not Mieszkowski had intended to attempt an escape on this occasion remains open, because a week later he ^{was} arrested.

37. Mieszkowski was arrested two days after the start of his annual leave. He had left his home in the morning, wearing civilian clothes, to take his dog for a walk. The animal later returned home alone. Mieszkowski had been arrested by a security officer, Capt. Stefanowicz, who had pulled him into a waiting car and had driven him to the Informacja Headquarters. When Mieszkowski's wife heard of this, she instantly realized the meaning of the matter and, without delay, called on the commander-in-chief of the Navy, Rear Admiral Cherokov. Cherokov appeared to be completely astonished by the news of Mieszkowski's arrest; he telephoned Col. (Fnu) Prystupa, the head

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of the Informacja, but doubted whether he would be able to bring much influence to bear upon the case, as the Informacja acted completely independently of local military commanders and even of the Political Directorate, often leaving these in complete ignorance of its actions.

38. Details of Mieszkowski's internment in the cellars of the Informacja building in Gdynia are lacking, but he was soon transferred to Warsaw. The following incident reportedly took place while Mieszkowski was in prison in the capital:

During an evening check parade in the prison courtyard, a high-ranking security officer asked in Russian which of the prisoners was Mieszkowski. When Mieszkowski was pointed out to him he walked up to him and, standing very close, said, "I will hang you myself". To this Mieszkowski replied that he would not be hanged. He was an officer in the Polish Navy, and if he were to be executed, he would be shot. Thereupon the security officer struck him in the face. A few days later Mieszkowski was indeed shot.

39. Of the other arrested officers, Pszybyszewski and Krawczyk were shot, and this was apparently the fate of Capt. Staniewicz as well. Capt. (Fnu) Wojcieszek was the only one who, despite prolonged torture and brainwashing, refused to confess guilt at his show trial.

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He was released in October 1956. Captain (Fnu) Kasperski, who had been sentenced to a long period in prison, was also released in 1956. However, he was in such a state of exhaustion that he lost consciousness while crossing a street, was run over by a streetcar and lost his right leg. Cmdr. Rychel became mentally disturbed during the prolonged tortures that he suffered in detention, and he was confined for a long period in the prison hospital. When he was finally released, he suffered from serious amnesia and refused to rejoin his family, which he had completely forgotten. Cmdr. Weglarz was brought very close to death during his interrogations, and was saved only by the last-minute intervention of the doctor. Cmdr. Krzywlec died of a heart attack, a few days after being released from prison in 1956.

40. Nor were the prewar petty officers spared in the purges which were being carried out by Soviet NKVD officers in Polish uniform. Seven petty officers serving on the Blyskawica^{-caps-}, 10 petty officers of the submarine force, and 18 persons, nearly the entire crew, of an anti-submarine cutter were^{all} arrested.
41. In 1951, the skipper of the Polish surveying vessel ZURAW, Second Lieutenant (Fnu) Ignatowicz, was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment, his political officer to 10 years, and a few of the petty officers to from three to seven years. The reason was a mutiny which took place on board the vessel, after which the mutineers took the vessel to the Swedish port of Ystad, and part of the crew found political asylum in Sweden. As a result of this incident, the Informacja took

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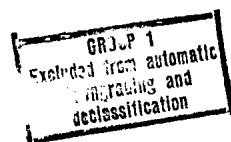
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special precautions about all Polish vessels leaving the naval base. Each boat about to sail had to be reported to the office of the Informacja by the skipper personally. This was to be done separately from, but parallel with, the routine permission to leave port, which every ship's captain had to obtain from the duty officer of the Operations Branch. The presence of a security officer on board each vessel *with their own special codes and transmitted and received signals* became routine; these officers were equipped through the vessel's radio without the captain's knowledge. A special top secret order empowered the security officer to call off any cruise or sea action and to demand that the skipper return the vessel to base. All voyages through the Sound and other narrow straits near the Swedish coast were preceded by special security precautions. The most important of these was to put ashore those petty officers and enlisted men who, it was suspected, might make an attempt to jump ship. However, in spite of the most stringent security precautions, a number of sailors and cadets deserted near Trellegorg, Olands, Sodra and in the Sea of Marmara.

42. Another group of officers who fell under the suspicion of the newly arrived Soviet officers was that of former Soviet citizens who, after 1945, had not returned to the USSR but had remained in Poland and acquired Polish citizenship. Most of these officers were actually of Polish or Polish-Russian origin. They became objects of contempt for the Soviet officers, who referred to them as "renewed" and "second-hand" Poles. In this category figured such officers as Mietielica, Malinowski, Weiss, Tambowski, and Dabrowski.

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1952

43. The year 1952 was marked by enormous increases in the Navy's budget, unheard of in the history of that service. Huge sums were spent on the development of an administration system based on that of the USSR. Much money went into refitting old vessels, many of which were almost wrecks and better suited for the scrapyard than for repair. Large buildings were designed to house the Political Administration and the Quartermasters Branch, and these were constructed in a short while, in spite of the shortage of housing for the civilian population, about which the Communist press was silent. At a time when the general standard of living in Poland was extremely low, people were existing near the starvation level, and even the majority of officers in the Navy and persons in the professions were receiving minimal wages and living in hopelessly overcrowded conditions, the Soviets generously decided upon and executed the following projects, financed from Polish sources:

- a. The Officers Nautical School was converted into an Academy, with facilities for 800 students and a staff of 200 instructors and professors.
- b. The freighter, OPOLE (3000 dwt), was transferred from the Merchant Marine and converted into the training vessel, ZETEMPOWIEC.
- c. A large, new building was erected for the Naval Staff and linked to the existing building. This

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huge combination would have been adequate to serve the naval staff of one of the major world powers.

- d. Two prewar Polish vessels were returned from Britain. These were the destroyer BURZA and the submarine WILK. The BURZA was put into the shipyards for capital refitting and re-arming; this decision of the Soviet officers cost Poland 28 million zlotys, and the job took three years to complete. The BURZA left the shipyards with four single 100-mm. guns of Soviet manufacture and a number of 37-mm. antiaircraft guns. Her maximum speed was reduced to 23 knots, she had no torpedo tubes, and her anti-submarine equipment was poor. The WILK was scrapped.
- e. Because the great increase in the number of duties to be executed by officers, on the Soviet model, had resulted in a shortage of commissioned personnel, many officers from the Merchant Marine were transferred to the Navy, and, by the end of 1954, there were 80 such transferees. All of them were young graduates of the Nautical School who had completed additional training in the Navy. Service in the Navy was forced upon them in spite of their protests, so that they became a continuous source of trouble because of their demands to be

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released from the Navy. Eventually a reprisal action was launched against them by the Navy Command. Several of them were court-martialled and others were discharged from the Navy, but were forbidden to sail on foreign-bound ships, and were closely watched by the political and security authorities. In 1956, all ^{the officers transferred from} the Merchant Marine were released from the Navy.

1953

44. After having reached a record intensity in 1952, there was a notable decline in terror and brutality in 1953. The only major change to fall into this category was the relief of Vice Admiral Cherokov by the Soviet Rear Admiral Vinogradov. Cherokov was then appointed Chief of Staff of the (Southern) Baltic Fleet in Kaliningrad. His successor, Vinogradov, was a sharp contrast to him. He was a vulgar rustic who acted ^{as a} rude conqueror towards his subjects. His first action, which was carried out efficiently and brutally, was to strip the Navy of its traditional outward characteristics. The following were altered completely and were made to resemble as closely as possible those of the Soviet Navy: uniforms, colors, flags, jacks, pennants, ship ceremonies, and even the color of the internal paint work of the vessels. At the same time, the Political Directorate made every effort to explain away the drastic changes being made, and a notable difference was indeed felt after the appointment of

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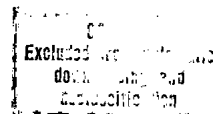
Col. (Fnu) Malko as its new head. Malko was a Pole of Russian extraction and an old-time officer in the Red Army. As was to become clearer at a later stage, these were symptoms of a less drastic political line being adopted by the authorities. At the same time, the terrorist activities of the Informacja also decreased.

1954

45. The year 1954 was notable for the armaments and equipment acquired by the Polish Navy during this period. The first new acquisitions were four small corvettes (according to Soviet naval terminology, large anti-submarine cutters). The first of Poland's new submarines also arrived in this period. Large quantities of modern technical equipment, together with spare parts and instruments, were obtained as well. This material included radar, sonar, coastal artillery, radio station equipment, torpedos, and mines. These created great amazement and admiration among the naval personnel, who had not seen any new and modern equipment in the Polish Navy since 1945. In this respect the Navy had always been kept last in line among the Polish Armed Forces, mainly for political reasons.
46. Several officers were sent from the USSR to train the Poles in the use of this new equipment. Not long after its arrival, mechanical failures began to be a common occurrence, and the local technicians found that they were due to faulty and negligent manufacture. The major components of the radio, radar, and electro⁽ⁿ⁾autical and

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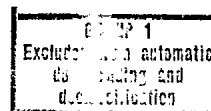


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electronics equipment were found to be poor copies of models manufactured by such Western countries as Sweden, Germany, and Great Britain. Such became the target for some bitterly sarcastic jokes which spread throughout the Navy and came to the attention of the political authorities, who began a special propaganda campaign to reinstate the prestige of Soviet industrial products and to prove the originality and superiority of the Soviet material.

47. The corvettes were modern and fairly new, having served three to four years in the Soviet Navy. The external appearance of these vessels was fine, but inspection showed that a considerable part of the equipment on board had been seriously neglected and was, in some cases, out of order.
48. In 1954, the Polish Navy received five Soviet-manufactured submarines, the first to arrive being the MALIUTKA. These submarines had all been constructed during the war and were in bad condition and poorly equipped. The scandal caused by their condition was so great that no amount of propaganda from the Political Directorate disguised the truth. The question arose in the Navy's Technical Branch whether or not to scrap one of the submarines and to cannibalize it to improve the equipment of the other four. It had been said that these vessels were so primitively and poorly constructed that they did not even compare to the standard of the prewar Polish submarines, and the Soviet officers who handed them over to the Poles were themselves plainly embarrassed by their condition. Chief Engineer of the

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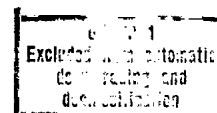


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Polish Navy's Submarine Branch at the time was a Soviet officer, Cmdr. Eng. (Fnu) Novikov. He was popular with the Polish officers, and on one occasion, at a party, made a joke about the newly acquired submarines. As a result of this, he was soon recalled to the USSR.

49. In 1954, Col. (Fnu) Wisniewski was appointed Naval Chief of Staff. He had recently graduated from a military academy in Moscow and had only a minimal knowledge of naval matters. Nevertheless, he adopted a diligent attitude towards his new post, carefully noting the opinions of his advisers. This, coupled with the fact that he was a strong disciplinarian, enabled him to overcome a number of very difficult problems which he faced in his new post and also to adopt an independent and tough attitude towards the Soviet officers.
50. In winter 1954, Cmdr. (Fnu) Studzinski returned to Poland from the Soviet Naval Academy in Leningrad and was promoted to the post of deputy commander of the Polish Navy. He was the first of the officers who had been promoted in 1949 to reach so high a position and was also a favorite of Rokossovsky. Within one year he was promoted to the rank of full captain, and the Party authorities appointed him a member of the Sejm.
51. In the same year, the Polish training vessel ZETEMPOWIEC made its first postwar voyage outside the Baltic Sea and visited Sevastopol. Additional security and political officers were posted on board the vessel for the voyage, and stringent security precautions were

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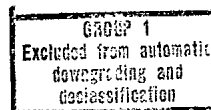
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enforced. While passing through various narrow passages and straits, the cadets were kept below deck, and this had the unintended effect of increasing their desire to see for themselves what the Western world was like. One attempt at desertion was made, and the chief security officer, Capt. (Fnu) Mucha, feared for his own fate because of the incident. The attitude of the Soviets towards their Polish visitors was contemptuous and condescending.

1955

52. In 1955, Capt. Studzinski was promoted to the rank of rear[^]admiral and appointed commander-in-chief of the Polish Navy. In the same year an increasing number of officers was sent to the Soviet Naval Academy in Leningrad and, after graduation, they took up posts at the Polish naval academy as commanders of units and squadrons, chiefs of staff, etc. Most of these officers had been graduates of the 1949 course and, after tactical training in the USSR, part of them were put at the disposal of the Polish Ministry of Defense and the Coast Guard (the latter under the competence of the UB). These appointments resulted in the replacement of many Soviet officers by newly trained Polish personnel.
53. It should be mentioned in this context that the first Soviet officers who returned to the USSR encountered the customary suspicion towards Soviets who had lived abroad. They were posted to stations in the

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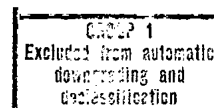
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Far East or the White Sea ports, where they were given minor appointments.

1956

54. By 1956, the Polish Navy had been completely remodelled along Soviet lines, and all training methods, operational preparedness, tactical alert procedures in case of war, etc. were closely synchronized with the Soviet Baltic fleet. Maneuvers were controlled by direct long-range telephone from Kaliningrad. The battle strength of the Navy had not, however, changed radically in this period. An early warning system was set up along the coast, and these points comprised antiaircraft radar and sonar apparatus. The coastal artillery was equipped with 130-mm. guns, which were deployed at regular intervals along the coast and at various strategic points. The Navy was now issued with jet fighter aircraft, and the number of these units was increased. A full regiment of marines was organized and operated in close cooperation with a unit of landing craft.
55. By the end of 1956, the Polish Navy held the following vessels: two destroyers, one large submarine, five small submarines, four small corvettes, three patrol boats, twelve minesweepers, nine subchasers, two motor torpedo boats, two surveying vessels, twelve landing craft, two training ships, and several supply vessels.
56. During the October 1956 events, the Navy solidly backed Gomulka; in all units and vessels spontaneous meetings were held at which

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the command staff initiated discussion of the situation after the political officers had disappeared from the scene. Strong attacks were directed at these occasions against Rokossovsky and the Soviet officers, and it was expected that far reaching changes would be made. Studzinski was sent to Leningrad on the pretext of additional study, and Wisniewski was promoted to rear admiral. Wisniewski won great popularity by marching with the revolutionary students, and a speech made by him at a mass meeting in Gdansk evoked general enthusiasm. He then dramatically refused to allow a Soviet naval unit consisting of a cruiser, four destroyers, and several smaller craft to enter the harbor at Gdansk. A landing craft of this unit which entered the harbor was ordered to leave immediately, and the Soviet fleet was told to keep clear of Polish territorial waters and, under no circumstances, to cross the Hel Peninsula - Gdansk line. The shore batteries on the Hel Peninsula and at Redlowo were ordered to stand by, and the commanding officers of these batteries were warned to expect orders to open fire at any time. All this took place on the eve of the arrival of the Soviet delegation in Warsaw, and the courageous stand of the Navy provided an effective backing for the subsequent Polish defiance of Khrushchev.



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